

Find Your Roots

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Summary: Returning to attempt her final year of Hogwarts again might have been one of the stupidest things Pansy Parkinson had ever done. Well, except for that one time she suggesting turning the Savior of the Wizarding World over to Voldemort. That was not a highlight.

Neville/Pansy 8th Year (T) [[Episode 3 of the Unlikely Collection - Series of Rare Pairs]]

1. Black Cat

****Disclaimer:** **This is all for fun, I do not claim ownership of the characters or anything recognized from the work of JK Rowling. I am only borrowing them.

_Warning: _Teen themes, subject to change: mild violence, scenes of a suggestive sexual nature, adult themes including but not limited to death and disease both mental and physical.

[A/N] 4/15/2016 What is a Rare Pair? As a couple/pairing, they have less than 0.05% representation on this site. This is with the ONLY filter as the pairing, not narrowed down by language or rating or anything. As of posting this story, there are 15 stories out of over 739,000 in the Harry Potter conglomerate featuring these two! For those who would like to know, that is 0.00002%.

This was born of a drabble prompt over in Choose Dare, it was Chapter 12. And then tumblr happened. Essentially, I have no self control. Thank you to ****scrumptiousinternetllama**** for the original pairing suggestion. See what you've done?

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><p>-Find Your Roots | One | Black Cat-<p>

Returning to attempt her final year of Hogwarts again might have been

one of the stupidest things Pansy Parkinson had ever done. Well, except for that one time she suggesting turning the Savior of the Wizarding World over to Voldemort. That was not a highlight.

Her train compartment was empty the entire ride to Hogwarts and there was an empty chair on either side of her for every meal and class except Potions. Longbottom was stuck next to her after coming in late on the first day. Something about helping Sprout with the Tentaculas.

Pansy was not the only returning seventh year student who hadn't quite gotten the education she'd desired in the 1997-1998 school year, but she was the only Slytherin. Handfuls of Hufflepuffs, Gryffindors, and Ravenclaws were in her classes. The teachers generally lumped her in with the true seventh year Slytherins, which she did not mind at all. They understood why she came back and didn't treat her like a black cat walking across their path, as if she were cursed. Maybe she was cursed.

The weeks moved like a pendulum; some days sped by in a blur while others stayed suspended in the air just waiting to drop. Potions always slowed down the clock. It took so much concentration to steadily cut roots into equal portions without bumping elbows with your brewing partner. Some days she swore the tables in the lab had shrunk instead of acknowledging that the students had simply grown up into long armed and legged adults.

Halloween raced up to meet them like the fall of the pendulum. Pansy wouldn't have known it was Halloween if they didn't start brewing obscenely colored potions with Slughorn to decorate the Great Hall with at dinner. Her class was ahead of the curriculum as they were all returning students so cauldrons of Babbling Brews brighter green than could ever be natural and nausea remedies glowing an orange color a shade brighter than a pumpkin rinds covered the tables. It was all rather gauche in her opinion. Not that anyone would ask it of her.

"Wait, stop. Use the silver knife, not the steel."

When his lab partner continued to move her hand toward the steel instead of silver he reached out and grasped her wrist. Pansy stiffened and twisted her wrist with her fingers pulled together tightly so her hand slipped through his easily. With one step she put another three feet of open air between their bodies. The knee jerk reaction was instant, obviously something practiced or forged from necessity, and that made his heart heavy.

"Sorry," Neville muttered, turning back towards their purple-filled cauldron. "The steel will contaminate those roots."

Pansy blinked owlishly at him, absentmindedly rubbing her wrist where his bare skin had touched hers.

"Thanks," she croaked out finally. "I...I didn't hear you. People don't really talk to me."

Neville glanced at her through his lashes as he stirred, counting under his breath. The rest of the class passed in silence, but it felt lighter than it had since she'd returned to Hogwarts. Every Potions class after Halloween, Neville waited to walk out of the

classroom with her and made a point to make conversation with her in front of whomever was in the hallway. Pansy even caught herself smiling once. Maybe she wasn't cursed after all.

2. I Wish I Could Hate You

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[A/N] 4/15/2016. Thank you to ****toodleoo-writes**** on tumblr for the second prompt!

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><p>-Find Your Roots | Two | I Wish I Could Hate You-<p>

"What is it about me, am I your next project? Your nextâ€|seedling to save, Longbottom?"

"Pansy, where is this coming from, of course not! We're friends!"

Dark hairs escaped from the pins in her hair, falling to frame her face, the signs of bangs not quite grown out yet. Neville itched to reach out and brush them away before they get caught in her eyelashes.

"Friends!" she spat, hands balled into fists. Her motions loosened the scarf around her neck, the wool gripping precariously to her shoulder. "Did I give you any indication that I wanted your concern or attention or your_ friendship_?"

The hand slowly rising dropped sharply to his side. Pre-war Neville would walk away, or cry, or some embarrassing combination of the two. But this Neville knew exactly why the sharp claws were out.

Potions was a nightmare that day. Hard enough that it was a mix of returning students with haunted eyes or battle scars, but she was the only Slytherin. Alone. And trying so damn hard. Weeks and weeks of peace lulled the two into a sweet routine of sharing a workbench every class and the corridors after. The whispers throughout the castle were easy to ignore, or so he'd thought.

Neville set his jaw, reaching out to grab both of her shoulders. He counted it as a small victory that even when she was out of her mind with anger, or grief, or guilt or some strange combination of all three, the girl did not flinch away from his touch. The girl who refused to come near to anyone else automatically folded into him.

"I wish I could hate you," she mumbled into his jacket, shoulders shaking with repressed emotion.

He felt her hands sneak into the pockets of his winter coat,

something she'd done dozens of times before. This time, he planted a tentative kiss to the top of her head.

End
file.